

We claim:

1. A method for notifying the recipient of an electronic message mail of a local action required to the contents of the electronic mail message comprising the steps of:
  - receiving an electronic message;
  - 5 determining whether there is a local action required by recipient in response to the contents of the message;
  - determining whether recipient has performed an action in response to the contents of the message within; and
  - transmitting an action completion message to the sender of the original electronic
  - 10 message notifying the sender of the completion of the local action by the recipient.
2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein said required action determination step further comprises detecting an action-required indicator in the received message.
- 15 3. The method as described in claim 2 wherein said indicator is a marker embedded in the received message.
4. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising before said message receiving step, the steps of:
  - 20 marking a created message at the message origination location to indicate that an action is required in response to that message; and
  - transmitting that message to a recipient location.
5. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising before said action completion transmitting step, the step of generating a message at the recipient location to remind the recipient to perform an action in response to the received message, when there is a determination that recipient has not performed an action in response to the received message.
- 25 6. The method as described in claim 4 wherein the message is marked to indicate that an action is required regardless of the type of required action.
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7. The method as described in claim 2 wherein said indicator is a marker displayed in the received message.

8. The method as described in claim 4 further comprising after said local action  
5 determination step, the steps of:

determining a priority for a received message requiring an action, the message priority being based on the characteristics of the type of action required in the message; and

10 inserting the received message into a priority list of messages that required an action.

9. The method as described in claim 8 further comprising the step of removing a message from the priority list at the completion of an action in response to that message.

15 10. The method as described in claim 8 wherein said action performed determination step further comprises performing periodic checks of the message, the frequency of the checks being based on category of the message.

11. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for notifying the  
20 recipient of an electronic message mail of a local action required to the contents of the electronic mail message comprising:

instructions for receiving an electronic message;

instructions for determining whether there is a local action required by recipient in response to the contents of the message;

25 instructions for determining whether recipient has performed an action in response to the contents of the message within; and

instructions for transmitting an action completion message to the sender of the original electronic message notifying the sender of the completion of the local action by the recipient.

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12. The computer program product as described in claim 11 wherein said required action determination instructions further comprise instructions for detecting an action required indicator in the received message.

5 13. The computer program product as described in claim 11 further comprising before said message receiving instructions, instructions for:

marking a created message at the message origination location to indicate that an action is required in response to that message; and

transmitting that message to a recipient location.

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14. The computer program product as described in claim 11 further comprising before said action completion transmitting instructions, instructions for generating a message at the recipient location to remind the recipient to perform an action in response to the received message, when there is a determination that recipient has not performed an  
15 action in response to the received message.

15. The computer program product as described in claim 12 further comprising instructions for displaying a marker indicating an action is required for the received message.

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16. The computer program product as described in claim 13 further comprising after said local action determination instructions, instructions for:

determining a priority for a received message requiring an action, the message priority being based on the characteristics of the type of action required in the message;

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inserting the received message into a priority list of messages that required an action.

17. The computer program product as described in claim 16 further comprising the  
30 instructions for removing a message from the priority list at the completion of an action in response to that message.

18. The computer program product as described in claim 17 wherein instructions for determining when an action is performed in response to message further comprises instructions for performing periodic checks of the message, the frequency of the checks  
5 being based on category of the message.